

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus comprising:

a fixing device disposed on a transportation path, on which a sheet member having a non-fixed image formed thereon is transported, and having roller members for fixing the image by the application of heat to the non-fixed image;

a mounting device for freely attaching or detaching the fixing device to or from the image forming apparatus; and

the mounting device including a guide member associated with the image forming apparatus, for guiding the fixing device in a slidable manner;

the guide member including an inclined surface on which the fixing device is placed to be guided upward along the inclined surface when the fixing device is attached to the image forming apparatus by the mounting device.

Claim 2. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image is formed on the sheet member on the transportation path, and the guide member guides the fixing device in a direction substantially perpendicular to the transportation path.

Claim 3. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the inclination angle of the guide member causes the fixing device to slide by its own weight when the fixing device is withdrawn out of the image forming apparatus.

Claim 4. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the guide member includes a stopper for holding the fixing device when the fixing device is moved to a lower end of the inclined surface.

Claim 5. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the fixing device includes a sliding portion which is brought into sliding contact with the inclined surface;

the inclined surface has a recess for holding the sliding portion of the fixing device in temporary engagement; and

the recess is formed on the inclined surface closer toward the inside of the image forming apparatus than the stopper.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a conductive resilient member for grounding the fixing device to the image forming apparatus.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a rotation input unit for transmitting rotating drive force to the roller members in the fixing device;

a rotation output unit provided in the image forming apparatus in such a manner as to be freely brought into contact with or separated from the rotation input unit for applying the rotating drive force to the rotation input unit when in contact with the rotation input unit; and

a pressing member for pressing the rotation output unit against the fixing device;

wherein the rotation output unit is shiftable in a direction corresponding to the direction in which the fixing device is moved on the inclined surface such that the rotation output unit is connected to the rotation input unit in a secure contact therewith by pressing the rotation output unit against the fixing device by the pressing member.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said guide member includes a stopper for stopping motion of the fixing device as the fixing device slides out of the image forming device.

Claim 9. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said conductive resilient member provides a force for causing said fixing device to move along said inclined surface.

Claim 10. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus comprising:
an image fixing device for fixing an image formed by said apparatus;
a mounting device for mounting said fixing device to the apparatus and allowing said fixing device to be removed from the apparatus;

the mounting device including an inclined surface and a support member for supporting the fixing device on the inclined surface,

wherein the fixing device is slidable along said inclined surface in an upward direction for attachment to the image forming apparatus and slidable along said inclined surface in a downward direction for detachment from said image forming apparatus.

Claim 11. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the inclination angle of the inclined surface causes the fixing device to slide by its own weight when the fixing device is withdrawn out of the image forming apparatus.

Claim 12. (New) An image forming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said mounting device includes a stopper for stopping motion of the fixing device as the fixing device slides out of the image forming apparatus.